

Despite Republican assurances that North Carolina's "bathroom bill" isn't hurting the economy, the law limiting LGBT protections will cost the state more than \$3.76 billion in lost business over a dozen years, according to an Associated Press analysis.



Over the past year, North Carolina has suffered financial hits ranging from scuttled plans for a PayPal facility that would have added an estimated \$2.66 billion to the state's economy to a canceled Ringo Starr concert that deprived a town's amphitheater of about \$33,000 in revenue. The blows have landed in the state's biggest cities as well as towns surrounding its flagship university, and from the mountains to the coast.

A unisex sign and a "We do not discriminate" slogan outside a bathroom in Durham, North Carolina.

North Carolina could lose hundreds of millions more because the NCAA is avoiding the state, usually a favored host. The group is set to announce sites for various championships through 2022, and North Carolina won't be among them as long as the law is on the books. The NAACP also has initiated a national economic boycott.

The AP analysis — compiled through interviews and public records requests — represents the largest reckoning yet of how much the law, passed one year ago, could cost the state. The law excludes gender identity and sexual orientation from statewide antidiscrimination protections, and requires transgender people to use restrooms corresponding to the sex on their birth certificates in many public buildings.

Still, AP's tally is likely an underestimation of the law's true costs. The count includes only data obtained from businesses and state or local officials regarding projects that canceled or relocated because of HB2. A business project was counted only if AP determined through public records or interviews that HB2 was why it pulled out.

Some projects that left, such as a Lionsgate television production that backed out of plans in Charlotte, weren't included because of a lack of data on their economic impact.

The AP also tallied the losses of dozens of conventions, sporting events and concerts through figures from local officials. The AP didn't attempt to quantify anecdotal reports that lacked hard numbers, or to forecast the loss of future conventions.



Bank of America CEO Brian Moynihan — who leads the largest company based in North Carolina — said he's spoken privately to business leaders who went elsewhere with projects or events because of the controversy, and he fears more decisions like that are being made quietly.

Museum manager Jeff Bell adheres informative backing to gender-neutral signs in the 21C

Museum Hotel public restrooms on May 10, 2016, in Durham, North Carolina.

"Companies are moving to other places because they don't face an issue that they face here," he told a World Affairs Council of Charlotte luncheon last month. "What's going on that you don't know about? What convention decided to take you off the list? What location for a distribution facility took you off the list? What corporate headquarters consideration for a foreign company — there's a lot of them out there — just took you off the list because they just didn't want to be bothered with the controversy? That's what eats you up."

Other measures show the country's ninth most populous state has a healthy economy. By quarterly gross domestic product, the federal government said, North Carolina had the nation's 10th fastest-growing economy six months after the law passed. The vast majority of large companies with existing operations in the state - such as American Airlines, with its second-largest hub in Charlotte - made no public moves to financially penalize North Carolina.

Shortly after he signed the law, Republican then-Gov. Pat McCrory issued a statement assuring residents it wouldn't affect North Carolina's status as "one of the top states to do business in the country."

HB2 supporters say its costs have been tiny compared with an economy estimated at more than \$500 billion a year, roughly the size of Sweden's. They say they're willing to absorb those costs if the law prevents heterosexual predators posing as transgender people from entering private spaces to molest women and girls — acts the law's detractors say are imagined.

Lt. Gov. Dan Forest, one of the strongest supporters, accused news organizations of creating a false picture of economic upheaval. A global equestrian competition that's coming to North Carolina in 2018 despite HB2 is projected to have an economic impact bigger than the sporting events that have canceled, Forest said. The Swiss-based group behind the event estimated its spending poured about \$250 million into the French region of Normandy the last time it was held — 2014. The organization said the figure came from a study by consulting and accounting firm Deloitte, but the Federation Equestre Internationale declined to release the report.

Forest declined a request for an interview based on AP's analysis.

"The effect is minimal to the state," Forest told Texas legislators considering a similar law. "Our economy is doing well. Don't be fooled by the media. This issue is not about the economy. This issue is about privacy, safety, and security in the most vulnerable places we go."

But AP's analysis shows the economy could be growing faster if not for projects that have already canceled.

Those include PayPal canceling a 400-job project in Charlotte, CoStar backing out of negotiations to bring 700-plus jobs to the same area, and Deutsche Bank scuttling a plan for 250 jobs in the Raleigh area. Other companies that backed out include Adidas, which is building its first U.S. sports shoe factory employing 160 near Atlanta rather than a High Point site, and Voxpro, which opted to hire hundreds of customer support workers in Athens, Georgia, rather than the Raleigh area.

"We couldn't set up operations in a state that was discriminating against LGBT" people, Dan Kiely, Voxpro founder and CEO, said in an interview.

All told, the state has missed out on more than 2,900 direct jobs that went elsewhere.

Trump Administration Erases Civil Rights Protections for Health and Human Services Programs

The Trump administration announced today that it would abandon civil rights rules for organizations receiving billions in taxpayer dollars.

Announced by HHS this morning, the rule immediately removes any requirement that recipients of grants from HHS enforce nondiscrimination rules that prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Impacting all discretionary and non-discretionary grants across the Department, the rule will allow anti-transgender discrimination in HIV and STI prevention programs, opioid programs, youth homelessness services, health professional training, substance use recovery programs, and many other life-saving services addressing crises with a disparate impact on transgender people in the US.

HHS has already separately moved to allow discrimination in Medicare and Medicaid programs through the elimination of an Obama-era rule protecting transgender people from discrimination in health care. The rule announced today will also remove rules prohibiting discrimination on the basis of religion.

Mara Keisling, Executive Director for the National Center for Transgender Equality, provided the following statement:

“This rule is an abuse of taxpayer dollars in the name of empowering hatred and bigotry towards society’s most vulnerable members. Stigma and prejudice are fueling a public health crisis among transgender people across the country, one that manifests itself as suicide, addiction, intimate partner violence, and HIV. Enabling providers of life-saving services to worsen these crises by rejecting transgender people is a moral crime and a severe abdication of HHS’s mission to preserve public health.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention:

- Transgender people are three times as likely to be living with HIV
- Transgender youth are six times as likely to experience a suicide attempt and at least twice as likely to use illicit substances such as heroin and opioids.

According to US Transgender Survey:

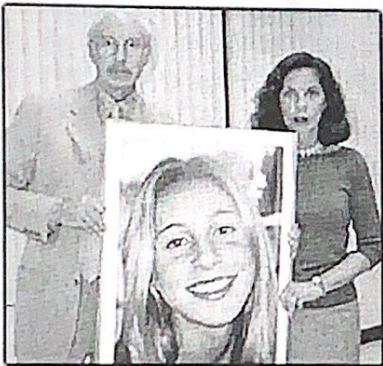
- Transgender adults are nine times as likely to experience a suicide attempt in their lifetime as their non-transgender peers
- One in three transgender people has experienced homelessness in their lifetime; one in eight has experienced it in the last year.
- Transgender adults are twice as likely to live in poverty and three times as likely to be unemployed

Should Elderly Drivers be Tested?

SANTA MONICA, California (CNN) -- The death of a teen-age girl, caused by a 96-year-old motorist, could prompt California to become the latest state to put restrictions on elderly drivers seeking to renew their licenses. Supporters consider the issue a matter of public safety while critics attack it as discriminatory.

While people 65 and older make up 12 percent of California's licensed drivers, they are involved in 17 percent of fatal crashes and cause 60 percent of those, according to a recent study by the state's Department of Motor Vehicles. "After age 80, there is a sharp decline in driving ability, although many drivers continue driving safely. Drivers over 80 are more than twice as likely to be at fault in a fatal collision than the average driver," DMV spokesman Evan Nossoff told The Los Angeles Times.

A bill to require continuing driving tests for older California residents narrowly passed in the state Senate and is now before the state Assembly. It would require California drivers age 75 and older to pass a written and road test when their licenses come up for renewal. Those tests would



be required more frequently as the drivers get older, until, at age 90, they would need to renew every year. State Sen. Tom Hayden, who wrote the measure, says the intent is to "save lives, particularly seniors' lives." But it was the death of a 15-year girl that led to the Hayden's proposal. Brandi Mitock of Santa Monica was run down in a crosswalk last November. Her father, who witnessed the accident and hopes to turn the tragedy into something positive, took his case to Hayden. Mark Mitock said he believes his daughter would be alive today if elderly motorists were tested for their driving abilities.

Brandi Mitock was run down by an elderly driver as she crossed the street. Byron Cox, the 96-year-old driver who struck Brandi, apparently hadn't taken a road test since he got his driver's license in 1918. Cox pled no contest. He was sentenced to five years probation, ordered to surrender his driver's license and told to donate \$5,000 to help Hayden win passage of the pending legislation.

Age discrimination?

Eleven states already have age-based renewal requirements and others are reviewing the issue, but they face stiff opposition from one of the country's most powerful lobbies -- senior citizens groups. These groups consider the Hayden bill an example of age discrimination. It may also be premature, said Jean Carpenter, a California lobbyist for the American Association of Retired Persons.

She said new technology being developed by the Department of Motor Vehicles may make it possible to test all drivers periodically using subjective road-simulation systems that could render the senator's concerns moot.

Many older drivers increase their safety on the road by driving only during daylight and finding routes that involve less traffic or no left-hand turns, she said. Preston says she fears she may lose

her license if she is made to take a new road test. AARP also sponsors refresher driving courses so older drivers can get a break on their insurance. At age 76, she fears she'll fail new test
Seventy-six-year-old Emma Preston, who has taken the class, told CNN she is afraid to get behind the wheel for a new road test, fearing she'll lose her license.

"I need to drive. I live in an area where there (are) no busses. Nothing," said Preston, who lives alone. According to studies, senior drivers have the highest rates of fatal car accidents per mile except teen-agers. However, older drivers have a higher death rate than their younger counterparts because they are more likely to die from automobile crash injuries, not because they cause more accidents, according to an insurance industry report. "It isn't just older people who can be poor drivers. Eighteen-, 21-, and 35-year-olds can also be, depending on the circumstances," said Lois Wellington, president of the Congress of California Seniors. Wellington said she does not oppose driver testing or other attempts to get all dangerous motorists off the road. But she does object to efforts that target a particular age group.

Supporters of the proposal deny that they're discriminating against older Californians. They say they're simply trying to save lives by testing older drivers whose reflexes and abilities may not be as sharp as they once were. "We put all kinds of burdens on 15-, 16- and 17-year-olds to be tested, and all evidence shows that at age 75 and beyond one's reflexes worsen," says Hayden. "This doesn't discriminate against anybody unless you think having to take a road test when you're 81 years old is too much," he added. As far as Mark Mitock is concerned, that's a reasonable request.

Transgender in Sports

As voters around the country brace for the general election in November, lawmakers in different states have begun the process of introducing bills aimed at rolling back the rights of transgender people, previewing a major civil rights issue aimed at polarizing voters.

So far for the 2020 legislative session, 19 bills have been filed in 11 different state legislatures which would limit the rights of trans people, according to a legislative tracker from the group Freedom for All Americans.

Most of these bills will begin to be debated once lawmakers begin the 2020 legislative session, setting the issue up as one incumbent lawmakers to use to satisfy their electoral bases, advocates tell the Daily Beast.

The sheer number of bills has even drawn the attention of Democratic presidential nominee Elizabeth Warren, who recently tweeted that trans people “need and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, not to be attacked by their state legislators.”

“The focus on anti-transgender bills is a last-ditch attempt to roll back the growing understanding and empathy that Americans have for their transgender family members, friends, neighbors and colleagues,” Kasey Suffredini, Freedom for All Americans' CEO and national campaign director, told the Daily Beast.

“These bills are designed to inflame stereotypes and myths about transgender people to prevent them from being able to live as who they are, go about their daily lives, and take care of themselves and their families.”

All of the bills introduced in either December 2019 or January 2020 were drafted by Republican lawmakers. Only three states where bills were introduced—Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and Washington—have Democratic governors, meaning in the other seven states some of these bills could be signed into law at some point this year.

Suffredini said that the rise of these bills has been part of an “aggressive” strategy from right-wing anti-LGBT activists since the Supreme Court codified same-sex marriage in 2015. He said that the bills serve no purpose than to “exploit and perpetuate anti-transgender myths”

The goal of many of these bills is to legislate the use of taxpayer funds for transgender medical care, preventing medical professionals from providing transgender medical care to minors, and how school officials should refer to students and where they should go to the bathroom.

One area where this line of fear-based thinking is gaining traction is in the realm of high school sports. Georgia, Missouri, New Hampshire, Tennessee, Washington, and West Virginia all have bills introduced in the past month that say students can only participate in state sport competitions in categories that match the sex assigned to them on their birth certificate.

The success of two female athletes from Connecticut, Terry Miller and Andraya Yearwood, at the Connecticut high school state athletics championships last year has prompted outrage from conservatives, including the president's son Donald Trump Jr. Both athletes' titles led to a federal complaint being filed against Connecticut's policy, drawing national attention, which has led to the introduction of bills in 2020.

In Georgia, State Rep. Philip Singleton told the Atlanta Journal Constitution that “a lot of things happening in states across the country” led him to file his bill about student athletes competing in the gender assigned to them at birth.